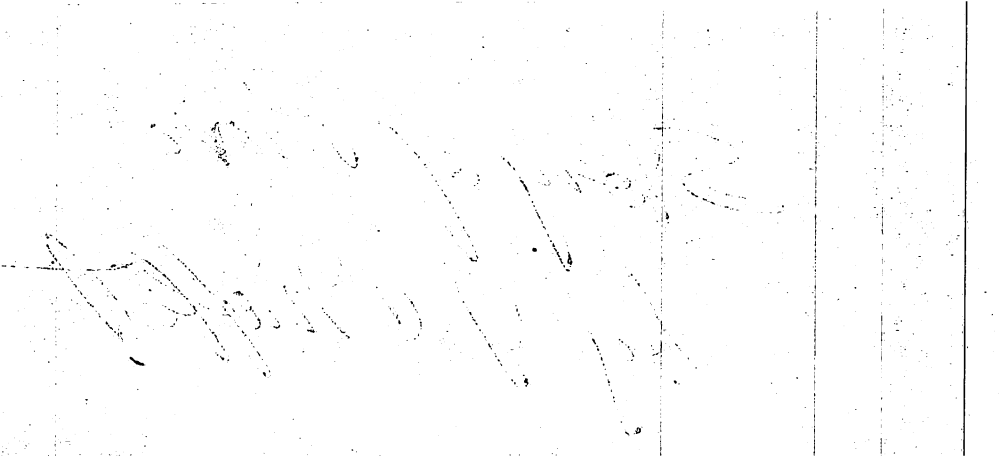


Story of Provo

by J. C. Moffitt



236 In 1891 a major project of the chamber of commerce was the completion of a railway system extending from Provo through Heber City and on to Park City and in the other direction from Provo southward through Utah County to the Tintic District.⁶

The early chamber of commerce, occasionally at least, called its meetings with some "fanfare." The Daily Enquirer stated,

*The Opera House Band was out at 7:00 on Thursday evening rendering stirring music and reminding the business men of the City of the Chamber of Commerce meeting to be held at the Court House. The band continued to play until the business men filled the room.*⁷

The early chamber of commerce considered a variety of projects in which it may become involved. One report stated, "The Provo Chamber of Commerce is considering a project for establishing a line of steamers across Utah Lake, to give a more direct route between Provo and other cities on the Lake, and Tintic [mining area]."⁸

A Commercial Club supplanted the chamber of commerce for a time but maintained approximately the same areas of interest.

September 24, 1921, the articles of incorporation were changed and the present Provo Chamber of Commerce came into existence. Thomas A. Pierpont, an industrialist the son of an early Salt Lake industrialist, served as president in 1921-22. John S. Smith, who did much to accelerate the productive capacity of the Knight Woolen Mills, was the second president. A. N. Taylor was the third president serving in 1924. Oscar A. Spear was president in 1925; J. William Knight served in 1926-27; Clayton Jenkins, who more recently became the chamber manager for many years, was the president in 1928; John O. Beesley served in 1929; L. W. Nims, in 1930; H. Aldous Dixon, 1930-31; W. R. Butler, 1932-33; Alex Hedquist, 1934; I. E. Brockbank, 1935; J. N. Ellertson, former Provo Mayor, in 1936. Beginning with Sidney W. Russell, who served as president in 1937-38 and others to the present, including thirty presidents, unnamed herein — all were alive in 1974.

During this second and major period of time the Provo Chamber of Commerce has served in a series of major projects, the realization of which has been of great benefit to Provo and to other communities in Utah County and beyond.

Among the projects sponsored by the chamber are the bringing of the steel plant to Utah County, the Utah Valley Hospital, the Deer Creek Reservoir, the earlier establishment of the Utah County Fair, the development of the Alpine Scenic Loop, the Provo Airport and perpetuation of the Business-Industry-Education Day. The chamber of commerce has not exerted equal effort to all of the above items either in work days or in money but has made substantial contributions to all of them.

p27 One major effort of the chamber of commerce, serving as an example, is the preliminary work to induce the Iron Mountain Steel Plant to locate at or near Provo. September 22, 1922, prominent members of the chamber of commerce and leading citizens of Springville organized themselves into a corporation and through this corporation established a trust company to safeguard the financial contributions of all donors that contributed toward the purchase of the steel plant site. This land acquired by this company of men became the site of the Columbia Steel Corporation. From this development later came the Geneva Works of the United States Steel Company that has contributed extensively to the economy of Provo and to Utah Valley.

Throughout its history the chamber has been an active supporter of Brigham Young University, Utah Technical College in Provo, and the public schools of this city.

More than 50 years ago, when the headquarters of the chamber of commerce was in the sales department of the Superior Motor Company at Provo, the chamber made a "survey of greatest needs" and agreed the following were such needs and began to work on them: (1) better housing facilities, (2) city beautification and improved sanitation, (3) improved recreation facilities, (4) better cooperation with the farmers, (5) more cooperation with Brigham Young University, (6) reclamation of lands in Utah County, and (7) added industrial expansion.

Committees were appointed at that time to pursue each of these projects. The chamber of commerce, to a large degree, operates on a "committee" basis and has from 16 to 20 committees actively at work continuously.

It has a woman's division that perpetuates its own program and cooperates with the chamber when needed.

The secretary-managers of the chamber of commerce since its reorganization in 1921 are Elmo Cunningham, Edwin S. Hinckley, D. Orlo Allen, Clayton Jenkins, Robert Halladay, Charles E. Peterson, William K. Wotherspoon, John W. Manning and Gordon W. Bullock.

The Provo Chamber of Commerce continuously surveys city successes and needs. A major concern during recent years has been that of cooperating with Provo City officials in the development of the downtown off-street parking and the modernization of Center Street. Considerable progress has been made toward the completion of this project, and more will be made, in keeping with official reports, in the near future. Several buildings in the business area of town, one block north and one south of Center Street have been removed in order to provide added parking space.

For many years Provo Chamber of Commerce offices were located at 232 West Center Street. They were then moved to 290 West Center Street; and with the completion of Provo's New City Center Complex in 1972, the chamber offices temporarily were at 371 West Center Street. The offices at present are at 10 East 300 North, Provo. Through its many years of service to the people in and out of Provo, providing helpful information to all who may